Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for verifying correspondence between one or more check documents and a bank statement document in an automated check mailing system, comprising the steps of:

obtaining account number information from a check document via an imaging device associated with a check feeder device;

obtaining account number information from a bank statement document via an imaging device associated with an automated in-line mailing (AIM) device;

comparing the account number information from the check document to the account number information from the bank statement document via a computer system to verify correspondence between the check document and the bank statement document; and

associating the check document with the bank statement document via an inserter control system upon verifying correspondence between the check document and the bank statement document.

2. (Currently amended) A method for returned check verification in a returned check inserter system, comprising the steps of:

capturing an image of at least a portion of each of a plurality of check documents in a set of check documents via an imaging device associated with a check feeder device;

determining account number information from the image for each of the plurality of check documents via a computer system; and

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comparing the account number information of at least one of the plurality of check documents to

the account number information of at least one other check document in the set of check documents <u>via</u>

<u>the computer system</u> to determine a match between the compared account number information.

3. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of obtaining account number

information from a check document comprises the step of capturing an image of at least a portion of the

check document; and wherein the step of obtaining account number information from a bank statement

document comprises the step of capturing an image of at least a portion of the bank statement document.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is employed during a

mail insertion operation.

6. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, <u>wherein the step of associating the check</u>

<u>document with the bank statement document comprises</u> further comprising the steps of:

    monitoring the position of the bank statement document; and

    regulating merger of the one or more check documents with the bank statement document.

7. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 6, further comprising the step of:

    identifying account number information mismatches between the one or more check documents

and the bank statement document <u>via the computer system</u>.

8. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of:

halting merger of the one or more check documents containing an identified mismatched check document via the inserter control system.

9. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of:

signaling an operator when a mismatched check document is identified via the computer system.

10. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of:

diverting the one or more check documents containing an identified mismatched check document via the inserter control system.

11. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of:

diverting said bank statement document when a mismatched check document is identified via the inserter control system.

12. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 7, wherein a mismatched check document is marked as a mismatched error document via the inserter control system.

13. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the account number information on both the check document and the bank statement document is a character string comprising a plurality of characters.

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14. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the account number information on the check document and the bank statement document is matched <u>via the computer system</u> using mismatch tolerance levels.

15. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of comparing account number information from at least one of the check documents in the set of check documents with account number information from at least one check document in at least one other set of check documents <u>via the computer system</u> to determine a match between compared account number information, wherein each set contains account number information for related accounts.

16. (Currently amended) A method for check verification <u>for a check inserter system,</u> comprising the steps of:

passing a check document set through a check feeder device, wherein the set comprises at least one check document;

imaging each check document in the set via [[an]] <u>a check</u> imaging device <u>associated with the check feeder device</u> to create an image of each check document in the set;

determining account number information for each check document from each image <u>via a computer system;</u>

determining account number information for a bank statement document <u>via a bank statement imaging device;</u>

comparing the account number information from each check document in the set to account number information on the bank statement document <u>via the computer system</u> to verify correspondence between each check document in the set and the bank statement document.

17. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 16, wherein the step of determining account number information for a bank statement document comprises:

loading a bank statement document onto an automatic inserter machine; and

imaging the bank document via a second the bank statement imaging device.

18. (Currently amended) A device for check verification <u>in an automated check mailing system,</u> comprising:

an imaging device <u>associated with a check feeder device</u>, wherein the imaging device images at least a portion of each check document in a set of check documents <u>in the check feeder device</u>; and

a computer system, the computer <u>system</u> in communication with the imaging device, wherein the computer system reads at least a portion of the image of each check document for account number information and compares the account number information of each check document in the set to account number information from every other check document in the set to verify correspondence between each check document in the set.

19. (Currently amended) A device for check verification <u>in a returned check inserter system,</u> comprising:

a first imaging device <u>associated with an automated in-line mailing (AIM) device</u>, wherein the first imaging device images at least a portion of a bank statement document to determine account number information on the bank statement document;

a second imaging device <u>associated with a check feeder device</u>, wherein the second imaging device images at least a portion of each check document in a set of check documents <u>in the check feeder device</u> to determine account number information on each check document; and

a computer system, the computer system in communication with the first imaging device and the second imaging device, wherein the computer system compares the account number information of each check document to the account number information from the bank statement document to determine a match between the compared account number information.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the second imaging device comprises:

a light source, the light source illuminating each check document;

a camera, the camera positioned to obtain an image of at least a portion of each check document;

a trigger device, the trigger device sensing each check document and activating the camera to obtain an image of each check document as each check document is sensed by the trigger device.

22. (Previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the trigger device comprises:

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a trigger sensor, positioned to sense the presence of each check document;

a trigger mechanism operatively connected to the second imaging device for activating the second imaging device; and

a trigger amplifier, operatively connecting the trigger sensor and the trigger mechanism.

23. (Previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the second imaging device is a digital, region of interest camera.

24. (Previously presented) A check verification system comprising:

an automated in-line mailing device (AIM), having a bank statement document imaging device positioned to image bank statement documents traveling along an AIM conveyor;

a check feeder, having a check document imaging device positioned to image check documents merging with said AIM conveyor;

a computer system for processing images obtained from the bank statement document imaging device and the check document imaging device for comparison of account number information to verify correspondence between bank statement documents and check documents.

25. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 24, further comprising:

a document control system, the document control system in communication with the computer system, wherein the document control system operates with the computer system to regulate the check documents and the bank statement documents during a mail insertion operation.

26. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 24, further comprising:

a control panel, the control panel in communication with the computer system.

27. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the check feeder further comprises:

a drive assembly for controlling the rate of check documents passing through the check feeder.

28. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein the check feeder is halted when a mismatch between account number information on a bank statement document and a check document is detected by the computer system.

29. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein the check feeder marks mismatched check documents for diverting.

30. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein the check feeder diverts mismatched check documents.

31. (Previously presented) The system as claimed in Claim 24, wherein the AIM diverts mismatched check documents and bank statement documents.

32. (Previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the account number information on the check documents and on the bank statement documents comprise a character string of numbers.

33. (Previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the computer system matches check document sets which contain related bank account numbers to the bank statement document.

34. (Previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the computer system matches the check documents to the bank statement document using selectable mismatch tolerance levels.

35. (Currently amended) A device for check verification in an automated check mailing system, comprising:

at least one imaging device associated with a check feeder for determining account number information from each check in a set of check documents;

at least one imaging device associated with an automated in-line mailing (AIM) device for determining account number information from a bank statement; and

a processor for determining whether the check document account number information matches the bank statement account number information.

36. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 31, wherein the AIM marks envelopes

having mismatched check documents and bank statement documents.